

Report on the Youth Policy Dialogue with Jessika Roswall, European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy



3 June 2026

Brussels, Belgium

Introduction

The Youth Policy Dialogue, titled *Invest in Nature: Youth Views on Impacts and Choices*, brought together 13 young people from 10 EU Member States to discuss how investments in nature can drive both environmental protection and economic resilience.

Ahead of the main event, an online preparatory meeting was held on 28 April 2026. The Dialogue itself took place on 3 June 2026 in the Charlemagne Building of the European Commission in Brussels, in the margins of EU Green Week - the annual flagship conference of DG Environment.

The Dialogue's theme aligned with that of [Green Week 2026](#), "*Investing in a Nature-Positive Economy*", and came at a pivotal moment - following the adoption of the widely debated [Nature Restoration Regulation](#), coinciding with the Commission's launch of a [stress test of the Nature Directives](#), and as the EU starts implementing its new [Bioeconomy Strategy](#). These developments carry significant implications for Europe's environmental and economic future - and hence for the young generation.

Participants represented a diverse range of perspectives, including NGOs/civil society, farmers, foresters, and rural community representatives. They were selected through DG Environment's channels and contacts, with careful attention to gender and geographical balance.

Due to unforeseen circumstances (an airport strike), the originally planned moderator, Humberto Delgado Rosa (environmental policy expert and former Director at DG Environment) was unable to attend the Dialogue. At short notice, Robert Konrad, Adviser for Natural Capital in DG Environment, stepped in as moderator. One participant also had to cancel her trip to Brussels for the same reason.

Summary of the Youth Policy Dialogue

Commissioner Roswall opened the Dialogue by underscoring the interconnected crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, degraded soil health and a failing water cycle, framing them as defining challenges of our time. She emphasised that young leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators, activists, and land managers must be at the heart of solutions, noting their capacity to bridge gaps between policy, economy, and society.

The Dialogue followed a structured Q&A format, with each participant briefly introducing themselves and their background before posing a prepared question to the Commissioner. This approach ensured diverse perspectives were voiced, with time allotted for all to speak. Commissioner Roswall responded to each query in turn.

The discussion unfolded in a relaxed atmosphere, with participants and the Commissioner exchanging in an open and cheerful manner. The rather intimate setting (no web streaming), with everyone seated around an historic College table, facilitated the interactions and helped keep the conversation natural and focused.

The Dialogue formed part of a broader programme, including a welcome dinner the night before the Dialogue and a dedicated briefing session with DG Environment policy experts the next morning. The

briefing session took place in the [Experience Europe](#) centre, giving participants an opportunity to explore the exhibition during the break between two sessions. Following the Dialogue, the group was invited to a “movie night” co-organised with Ciné-ONU at Cinema Vendôme, for the screening of the documentary [Eat More Trees](#), followed by a panel discussion. The two-days EU Green Week conference offered participants further networking opportunities.

Main takeaways

1. Protecting biodiversity while supporting rural prosperity and competitiveness

Participants discussed how biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration can support, rather than hinder, rural livelihoods and economic competitiveness. Particular attention was given to [pollinators](#), [forests](#), [soil health](#), [water resilience](#) and sustainable agriculture.

The discussion highlighted the need to ensure that environmental policies remain practical for farmers, foresters and rural communities, while creating opportunities through innovation, sustainable land management and the bioeconomy. There was broad recognition that achieving environmental objectives depends on strong partnerships with those managing land and natural resources.

2. Bridging divides and building trust through participation

A recurring theme was how to overcome conflicting perspectives on environmental issues, particularly between urban and rural communities. Discussions focused on wildlife coexistence, land use and the need to involve affected communities in shaping solutions.

The return of [large carnivores](#), especially wolves, emerged as a key example of the need to balance biodiversity objectives with local concerns. Participants stressed the importance of practical support, stakeholder engagement and locally tailored approaches.

A key takeaway was that environmental policies are more likely to succeed when they are perceived as fair, participatory and responsive to local realities.

3. Scaling up local success stories across Europe

Participants highlighted the potential of [bioeconomy](#) projects, [nature restoration](#) initiatives and [circular economy](#) solutions to contribute to EU priorities.

The discussion emphasised the need for stronger links between local, national and EU levels, enabling successful approaches to be shared, replicated and scaled up. There was broad agreement that local actors are already developing solutions that can accelerate Europe’s environmental transition if given sufficient visibility and support.

4. Mobilising Investment for Nature and Bioeconomy

Discussion focused on how public and private finance can better support nature restoration, sustainable farming and bioeconomy. Participants stressed the need for long-term, predictable investment frameworks and financing models that are accessible, fair and focused on delivering tangible environmental outcomes.

Regarding [nature credits](#), participants welcomed efforts to mobilise additional investment, they emphasised the importance of transparency, credibility and safeguards to ensure benefits reach land managers and local communities.

Follow-up Activities

Participants received the [news release](#), photos, slides of the policy presentations and links to all communications materials shortly after the event.

In further exchanges, participants received links to the '[vox pop](#)' video that some participated in, as well as the special Green Week edition of the DG Environment newsletter featuring the Dialogue.

Building on the policy briefing about the Birds and Habitats Directives, participants received information and were invited to submit their views on the “stress test” of the Directives, through the [open public consultation](#) (open until 10 Augst 2026).

- DG ENV [News article](#)
- DG ENV [X](#); [LinkedIn](#) ; [Bluesky](#)
- Commissioner Roswall [Instagram](#)
- “Vox pop” video
 - [Instagram](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [YouTube](#)

Annex



"I really enjoyed the time in Bruxelles and learned a lot. Thank you for giving us the opportunity." - Janna



"I will remember [Commissioner Roswall's] authenticity. Her style of leadership inspired me! I also want to give huge credits and thanks to you and your colleagues who provided us with all the information. You did very well in organising all the activities around the Green Week!" - Daniel

"Merci beaucoup pour cette très chouette expérience et bravo pour l'organisation!" - Thibault



Friday, 5 June 2026

The Brussels Times

GIUM

BUSINESS

ART & CULTURE

EU AFFAIRS

WORLD

EU youth urge action to link nature restoration and economic innovation

Thursday, 4 June 2026

By The Brussels Times Newsroom



Credit: Unsplash

EU Environment Commissioner Jessika Roswall met 13 young people from across the EU for a Youth Policy Dialogue during EU Green Week to discuss nature restoration and how investments in ecosystems can support resilience and the economy.

The discussion took place on the margins of the EU Green Week event and focused on restoring ecosystems — such as habitats that support wildlife and natural resources — and how this could relate to innovation, investment and local jobs, the European Commission informed in a release on Thursday.

Participants raised topics including biodiversity, pollinators and the bioeconomy, as well as “nature credits” and the circular economy.

Nature credits generally refer to schemes that assign a tradable value to actions that benefit nature.

Roswall also referred to the role of young Europeans in shaping policy by bringing ideas that link nature, the economy and society.

Part of a wider youth participation programme

The meeting was part of the European Commission’s Youth Policy Dialogues, which it described as an effort to integrate young people’s views into the EU political agenda.

The Commission said the dialogues are linked to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s Political Guidelines for 2024–2029 and are intended to support youth participation and engagement in democratic life.

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/eu-affairs/2172400/eu-youth-urge-action-to-link-nature-restoration-and-economic-innovation>